

# NEED FOR A LONG-TERM AGREEMENT FOR BAY-DELTA ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION AND WATER SUPPLY RELIABILITY

## I. OVERVIEW

- The December 15, 1994 Principles For Agreement On Bay-Delta Standards Between The State Of California and the Federal Government, while historic, provides only a three year horizon and deals with only a portion of the problems in the estuary. For California's long-term environmental and economic well-being, it is imperative that we act now to shape a plan that will allow environmental, urban, and agricultural objectives to be met on a long term basis.

## II. OBJECTIVE

- To develop recommendations for a broad-based, consensus agreement on a specific long-term plan that provides Bay-Delta ecosystem restoration, increased water supply reliability and drinking water quality protection.

## III. PROBLEMS WHICH MUST BE ADDRESSED

- **Ecosystem Restoration.** Numerous factors have contributed to the decline of habitat and biological resources throughout the Bay-Delta watershed. Some water project operations adversely affect flow and water quality conditions and in many cases result in high levels of mortality of key fisheries. Other factors, including physical modification of riparian and wetland habitat, introduction of exotic species, pollutant discharges, and overfishing have substantially contributed to the environmental problems of biological resources in the watershed. These environmental conditions do not provide an adequate level of protection and restoration of the estuaries biological resources and habitats.
- **Water Reliability.** Under current conditions water deliveries are inadequate to fully meet urban and agriculture demands. The urban economy requires a high level of water service reliability. Similarly, a reliable, adequate water supply and increased predictability are essential for a sustainable agricultural economy.
- **Drinking Water Quality.** Long term solutions must assure that present and future drinking water standards can be reliably met through a combination of improved source water quality and cost effective treatment processes.

- **Natural Disasters.** California runs the risk that earthquakes, floods or other natural disasters would disrupt water service to much of the State economy and could seriously harm the Delta habitat. Natural disaster planning that provides short and long term protection for the environmental and water supply values of the Delta is essential.

#### IV. AN INTEGRATED LONG-TERM APPROACH IS NEEDED

- An integrated long-term approach to solving these critical water and resource problems is expected to include:
  - Increased Conservation;
  - Expanded Water Recycling;
  - Increased Conjunctive Use of Surface and Groundwater;
  - Increased Reliability of, and Accessibility to, Voluntary Water Transfers;
  - Water Supply Facilities;
  - Appropriate Legal Protections and Institutional Changes to Implement the Package;
  - Increased Coordination of Local, State and Federal Programs;
  - Flows and Water Quality Adequate to Protect and Restore the Delta Ecosystem;
  - Reduced Human-Caused Mortality to Fish and Wildlife;
  - Expansion and Improvement of Wetland, Riparian and Other Types of Aquatic Habitat;
- To achieve agreement on a long term plan, it is expected that a mutually agreeable "short list" of comprehensive alternative packages will be developed by December 15, 1995. This will assist in the expeditious completion of the NEPA/CEQA process and is an essential condition for broad stakeholder support for an adopted plan.